

*Price*  
*Alex. M.*  
**MACKAY OF UGANDA.**

*The Story of a Consecrated Life.*



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*Mackay*

# MACKAY OF UGANDA.

## *A Romance of Mission Work in Darkest Africa.*

### I.

#### EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

ALEXANDER M. MACKAY was born on the 13th of October, 1849, in the village of Rhynie, in Aberdeenshire. His early education and training he owed almost entirely to his father, the Rev. Alexander Mackay, LL.D., who was Free Church minister in that parish. Dr. Mackay was a man of marked ability and varied accomplishment, as well as a devout Christian and a faithful preacher of the Gospel. He occupied the time not required for pulpit preparation, or parochial visitation, in scientific study and writing; but his greatest delight was the instruction of his son Alexander, who from childhood was bright and intelligent, and in very early years acquired much and varied knowledge. Till the age of fourteen he learned most of what he knew from his father, who made him his constant companion in his walks, as well as in the manse study. The sister, who became the biographer of her loved and lamented brother, may well say, in dedicating her book to such a father, that his "painstaking interest in the training and early education of his children laid the foundation of the noble, self-sacrificing life of the subject of this memoir."<sup>1</sup>

While he made great progress in classics and in mathematics under his father's tuition, and was a devourer of all kinds of literature, it was not from books alone that his mind in early years

obtained its chief development. In mechanical and practical matters he took eager interest. His favourite haunts were the village smithy, the gas-works, the carding-mill, the shops of the saddler and carpenter; and many a time he went to the nearest railway station, four miles off, to have a look at the engine, as it stopped for a minute or two, on its way to or from Huntly.

This preference for practical pursuits could hardly surprise the father, who had encouraged the diverse and desultory occupations, but it caused misgivings on one ground; and to the boy's pious mother it brought disappointment, as the design and the hope of both parents had been to see their son in the ministry. They could but commit their purpose to God, who in His infinite wisdom was preparing an instrument for other important service.

In 1864 Alexander was sent to the Grammar School at Aberdeen, his father having now less leisure to devote to his instruction. He had a good record for diligence and conduct, but his favourite pursuits were still outside the routine of school lessons. He was often watching the workmen in one of the large ship-building yards to which he had found admission; and he also got initiated in the art of photography, his Saturday holidays and other spare time being thus occupied.

Hitherto we have noted only the enlargement of his mind in the intellectual atmosphere where he had been reared. But his heart does not appear to have been yet spiritually affected, whatever influences may have been operating in the home of piety and prayer at Rhynie. In the early summer of 1865 he lost his mother. He was in Aberdeen at the

<sup>1</sup> To the publishers of this memoir (Hodder & Stoughton) we are indebted for permission to give quotations. The other chief authorities are *The Two Kings of Uganda*, by R. P. Ashe (S. Low, Marston & Co.), and the Church Missionary Society's publications.

time, and when he came to the funeral, a godly relative, who had been an angel of comfort in the house of sorrow and bereavement, told him the events of his mother's illness. She told how her prayers had been earnest for her absent boy, and how she had been charged to give to him her Bagster's Bible, her husband's wedding gift, and to write on it certain portions to be specially studied. Her dying message to be given to her boy was to "search the Scriptures." From this time the study of the Bible was his constant care, and in the earnest and prayerful search he found the saving knowledge of Christ, of whom the Scriptures testify. Long afterwards, when a copy of the Revised Version of the New Testament was sent to him, he recalled that season of sorrow when his softened heart was first touched by Divine love, and said that "the remembrance of his dear mother's message to 'search the Scriptures' had ever remained with him, and that the Bible was his guide, and counsellor, and greatest treasure."

In the autumn of 1867 the family removed to Edinburgh, and Alexander entered the Free Church Training College for Teachers. He was one of the most diligent and able of the students. At the close of the two years' curriculum, his diploma was awarded with special honour; his marks in every department being far above the average in the ordinary subjects, and also in school-class management, skill in teaching, and in the theory of music. For drawing, in which he had shown early proficiency, he also received a prize from the Art Department of South Kensington. The purpose of studying for the ministry seems to have been now set aside, his inclination being for following engineering as his calling. To this end he devoted most of his attention during three years' study at the University, taking the classes of Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, and Applied Mechanics. He also studied with Lieutenant Mackie, Professor of Engineering and Surveying.

In the afternoons he went to engineering works at Leith, where, in artisan dress, he was engaged in model-making, turning, and erecting machinery. In the evenings he attended classes on Chemistry, Geology, and other subjects at the School of Arts.

Notwithstanding the hard labour during each week, Sunday was not allowed to be a day wholly of rest, but found Mackay in busy activity in holy work. In the forenoon he was refreshed in spirit by the services in the church of which the venerated Horatius Bonar was minister. The afternoon was usually spent in conducting services in mission halls or at children's meetings, and in the evenings no teacher was more devoted and more regular in teaching at the "original ragged school" founded by Dr. Guthrie.

## II.

### RESOLUTION TO BECOME AN ENGINEERING MISSIONARY.

On the 1st of November, 1873, he left Edinburgh for Berlin, with the purpose of acquiring the German language more thoroughly. Here he soon obtained a good position as one of the draughtsmen in a large engineering company. He had to prepare drawings and designs for machinery of all kinds, but chiefly locomotives and portable steam engines. The employment was congenial, but not so his companions, most of whom were infidels, with lives in accord with their principles. But he found Christian companionship and sympathy in the house of Herr Hofprediger Baur, one of the royal chaplains, and one of the ministers of the Dom, or Cathedral. In May, 1874, he went to reside with Herr Baur's family as a boarder, and here he made the friendship of some of the élite of Christian society in Berlin. With these friends he kept up correspondence long after he had left Germany. He found in this little society a warm interest in all Christian work, and especially in foreign missions. Herr Baur

was himself engaged in translating the *Life of Bishop Patteson*, and it was a great delight to the young Scotchman to find this German home pervaded by a kindred missionary spirit; for already his mind had begun to cherish the thought of devoting himself to similar work. On May 4th, 1874, he made this entry in his *Diary*: "This day last year Livingstone died—a Scotchman and a Christian, loving God and his neighbour, in the heart of Africa. 'Go thou and do likewise.'" This certainly was a remarkable presentiment, and showed the bent of his mind even at this early time.

Not long afterwards, in a letter to his sister, dated August 30 of the same year, he declares his settled purpose. She had told her brother about a missionary meeting in Edinburgh, when Dr Burns Thomson gave an interesting account of Madagascar, and urged some of the young men who heard him to give themselves to the Lord's work, and go out there as medical missionaries. To this Mackay replied in his letter, "Well, I am not a doctor, and therefore cannot go out as such, but I am an engineer, and propose, if the Lord will, to go as an engineering missionary."

Immediately on receiving his sister's letter, and having in his mind this resolution, he wrote to Dr. Bonar, offering himself for the work and asking his counsel. It was no doubt an unusual proposal, and he felt that his family and his friends might even consider it a chimerical notion. But he reasoned the matter with them in such words as these: "I hope to connect Christianity with modern civilisation. Mohammedanism makes tremendous progress in Africa chiefly because it carries with it a higher civilisation than that which existed in the countries to which it comes. My chief energies I hope to be able to spend in establishing a college to train the young men in religion and science together. Of course, I expect to execute public works, as railways, mines, &c., which for one single-handed

is an enormous enterprise. It is more to help the missionaries that are already there than to supplant them that I go, also to prepare the way by which others more readily can go and stay there."

Here was the man ready. He had the missionary spirit, and every personal qualification of a spiritual kind; he had also a clear and sensible idea of a special mode of usefulness in the missionary field. In the providence of God it was not Madagascar, but another sphere of work that awaited him, in regions as yet unknown to him. It has been so with other men who have been eminent in the history of missions. Duff first thought of Africa as a field of labour, but was sent to India; and Livingstone, originally intended for China, lived and died for Africa.

In September, 1875, the great engineering company at Berlin was dissolved, and the chief director, a Jew, made Mackay the offer of partnership in similar works at Moscow. It was a tempting offer in a worldly point of view, but was refused because he was anxious to get into direct employment in the Master's cause. Having offered his services to the London Missionary Society for Madagascar, they had for the present been declined, and he determined to wait on the Lord's will, in hope of a suitable opening in His own time being presented. He went for a season to fulfil an engagement at an engineering factory at Kotbus, sixty miles south-east from Berlin. Here he found opportunities for Christian usefulness, and he busied himself translating some of Dr. Bonar's treatises and other works, which had been blessed to himself, and which he thought might be useful to others. He was thus engaged when there appeared the now famous letter of Stanley describing his visit to Mtesa, the king of Uganda, and challenging the Christian Church at once to occupy a field which gave every promise, the king himself professing to have become a Christian, and promising his

favour and protection. Mackay saw this letter, and was one of the first to offer his services. He at once entered into correspondence with the Church Missionary Society, and soon closed with the proposal to devote himself to the new mission near the Victoria Nyanza.

### III.

#### HOW UGANDA BECAME THE SPHERE OF HIS MISSIONARY LABOURS.

It may be well here to give a brief account of Uganda, and tell how this country and its people first came to be known to us in England. As far back as 1848, in expeditions from Mombasa, their station on the coast, the missionaries Krapf and Rebmann from afar saw the great mountains of which the now well-known Kilima Njaro was the most conspicuous. They also brought back reports from Arab traders of vast lakes to the west, in Equatorial Africa. These reports gave a fresh impulse to the zeal of geographers and explorers, and renewed the efforts that had often been made to discover the sources of the Nile. It was not, however, till many years later, in 1857, that an expedition was organised by the Royal Geographical Society specially to explore this region. Captains Burton and Speke, both of them at that time young officers of the Indian Army, were at the head of the expedition, which started from Zanzibar, and traversed regions hitherto unvisited by Europeans. In this journey Lake Tanjanyika was discovered, and during an illness which prostrated his companion, Speke pushed on, in a north-easterly direction, towards the equator, and saw another large expanse of water, now known as the Victoria Nyanza.

On returning to England the discoveries were deemed to be so important that a second expedition was organised, under command of Captains Speke and Grant, to verify and extend the results of the previous journey. They left the east coast in October, 1860; disappeared

in the wilds of the interior in September, 1861; and nothing was again heard of them till May, 1863, when one day there came from Egypt to the Foreign Office in London, the pithy and mysterious telegram—"The Nile is settled."

To ascertain the source of the Nile had always been the greatest object of geographical curiosity and ambition, and Speke thought he had solved the problem when he found the Victoria Nyanza. He concluded that this vast reservoir was really the source of the White Nile or main stream of the Egyptian river. Later researches have led to the modification of this idea. A still more important source of the river is now admitted to be in the remote mountain ranges, covered with perpetual snow, from which the water is ever flowing, over lands and through lakes, till it issues in one vast stream from the north of the Albert Nyanza. The Blue Nile and other minor affluents serve to swell the parent and main stream. To Speke, however, belongs the undoubted honour of having discovered—that is, made known to the civilised world—the Victoria Nyanza and the kingdoms and nations on its shores. The descriptions given by Speke, of the lake and the surrounding regions, were in the most glowing terms. Wherever he journeyed, he says that he "saw nothing but richness and what ought to be wealth. The whole seemed a scene of beauty, with a boundless sea in the background." Of these regions Uganda was the most important, and Speke's book of travels gives much curious and varied information about it. He was there in 1862, when the young king Mtesa (or Mutesa, as Mr. Ashe in his book always gives it, so as to be more pronounceable) was not yet crowned. The chief power and dignity remained with the queen-mother, to whom the strangers had to pay as much deference as to the king. There was civilisation of a higher kind than might have been expected in the natives of so remote a region. The ruling classes were

descendants of people who had come generations before from the east coast, and carried with them knowledge, and consequently power, superior to the people of the interior, whom they ruled with arbitrary sway. The king was despotic and absolute, but there were various departments of the government of which hereditary chiefs had control. The fertility of the country allowed the mass of the population to subsist with little toil, and there was a large number of warriors, who were sent to make raids on neighbouring tribes, the prisoners being sold to Arab slave-dealers.

The fame of Uganda and its king had been long and widely known throughout tropical Africa, when Stanley passed this way on his journey "across the Dark Continent." From Uganda he wrote the now famous letter wherein he described King Mtesa as well disposed towards Christianity, and urged the Christian Church to send a mission to his capital. The opportunity appeared favourable, and to the various missionary enterprises, organised or planned in Central Africa, was to be added the Church Mission to Uganda and the Victoria Nyanza. This was the sphere of labour to which Mackay's life was to be devoted.

#### IV.

##### ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

We left Mackay at an engineering factory in Germany. As soon as he could honourably resign his engagement there he returned to England, to arrange with the Church Missionary Society's Committee for his service in Africa. He arrived in London early in March, and at once commenced his preparations. Tools of all sorts for work in wood and iron were procured, and as the intention was to have a vessel built for the Victoria Nyanza, an engine and boiler had to be taken out. After much consideration, a boiler was designed by

him, on the principle of welded rings, each light enough to be carried from the coast to the lake by two men. Having finished what had to be done in London, he went to spend his last days at home, and to bid farewell to his friends in Scotland. This was indeed a busy time, for it was chiefly spent in acquiring practical knowledge of many useful arts. Many hours were passed in a printing office, others in a photographer's studio; he learned how to use a sextant and how to make various astronomical observations; and at a dispensary he was taught how to vaccinate, and other useful matters in medicine and surgery. He went to Glasgow also, to see various manufacturing and mechanical industries, and to Motherwell to be initiated in iron-puddling and coal-mining. He sought in every way to qualify himself for his work.

At length, returning to London on the 25th of April, 1876, he went to take leave of the Committee of the Society, along with four other members of the first missionary expedition to the Victoria Nyanza. There were in all eight, but Lieutenant G. Shergold Smith and two artisans had already left England. To Mackay and his companions, the Rev. H. Wright, the honorary secretary, delivered their final instructions, and in the name of the Committee commended them to their sacred service. In accordance with the usual custom, the missionaries briefly responded. Mackay, as the youngest of the band of brothers, spoke last, and he closed his speech with words which deeply affected those who heard them, and which were characteristic of the spirit in which he undertook the responsible task. He said he wished to impress on the Committee the probability of their hearing within six months that death had removed one of their number. The words were startling in their solemnity, and amidst the profound silence that followed he went on to say, "Yes; is it at all likely that eight Englishmen should start for Central Africa, and all be alive six

months after? One of us at least—it may be I—will surely fall before that. But what I want to say is this: when that news comes, do not be cast down, but send some one else immediately to take the vacant place.”

The foreboding was not baseless, for within three years seven of the eight first sent out had fallen at their post of duty, or had gone home invalided, and at the end of that time Mackay survived to be the only representative in Africa of that original band of pioneer missionaries.

Two days later, on the 27th of April, 1876, they embarked at Southampton; on May 6th were at Malta; on the 10th at Port Said; at Aden on the 17th, and on the morning of the 30th were at anchor off Zanzibar.

## V.

### ARRIVAL IN AFRICA; FIRST EMPLOYMENTS, AND JOURNEY TO LAKE NYANZA.

The remainder of that year and the spring of 1877 were occupied in various expeditions on the mainland, especially in efforts, which proved unsuccessful, to find a river route from the coast toward the Central Lake region. The streams were navigable for only a short distance.

During this time he obtained much information about the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, the head-quarters of which were now in Zanzibar. He had also opportunity of observing and studying in all its bearings the subject of the slave trade. He came to the conclusion that the checks to this curse of Africa by operations on the sea and the coast are almost infinitesimal, compared with measures that could be organised for its suppression in the interior. In his expeditions on the mainland he often came across slave caravans, which he found to be unceasingly carrying multitudes of victims to the coast.

An important work undertaken by Mackay was the making of a road for

230 miles to Mpwapwa. With immense labour, through forest and across marsh, and bridge-making when necessary, “a big road” was cut for fifty miles into the interior from the coast, forming the first section of what might become afterwards the great highway into Central Africa.

Another more serious cause of delay in Mackay's reaching his special sphere of labour arose from illness and broken health, after a severe attack of remittent fever. At last, in the early summer of 1878, he was able to commence his long journey inland, prolonged unduly by having to select routes most practicable, and to make detours in order to avoid collision with savage hostile tribes. Mpwapwa and Unyanyembe were the points where longest halts were made, and these places indicate the general bearing of the journey. On June 13, the village of Kagei was reached, on the southern shore of the famous Victoria Nyanza. On the evening of the previous day, a first glimpse of the magnificent lake had been obtained from a height. “As eagerly as ever the ten thousand Greeks shouted *Θάλασσα! Θάλασσα!* (the sea, the sea) in the immortal story of Xenophon, did I gaze on the silvery sea, and thank God that now I was near Nyanza at last. For had I not been two years and more on my way from the coast, and now an end to miserable marching was come, at least for a time? Had not my companions succumbed to the climate one by one, and even reinforcements failed? Now I was here alone to hold the fort till better days should dawn.”

Lieutenant Smith and Mr. O'Neill had preceded Mackay, taking with them from the coast a little steamer, the *Daisy*, carried in pieces, and reconstructed by O'Neill on the shore of the lake. They had written from Kagei on the 6th of December, 1877, and this was the last tidings of them. Alas, there was now revealed the story of their tragic end! In a tent at Kagei were kept the few relics of their possessions, brought thither

from the island of Ukerewe, where they had been slain. The *Daisy* was at Kagei, but in sadly shattered condition, and even the wood half consumed by devouring ants. The accounts of the catastrophe at Ukerewe being not very clear, Mackay resolved to go to the island to ascertain the truth. It was a perilous undertaking for Mackay to go there, for he did not know the temper of the natives of the island, but, in a noble exercise of Christian spirit, he determined to try to make peace, and prevent revengeful bloodshed.

He was from the first well received by the chief, Lukongeh, and the people. The true story of the sad event was told to him. An Arab slave-dealer, Songoro, had cheated and dealt treacherously with the king's people. Lukongeh was going to seize the Arab, who sought safety by joining Lieutenant Shergold Smith and O'Neill, who were then at the place with a few men. On the Englishmen refusing to give up the Arab, Lukongeh's warriors fell on them and slew them all. On hearing the true version of the affair, Mackay was convinced that the killing of his friends had been done in hot blood and in a sudden fray, without previous hostility or ill-will. He thought it best to accept the excuses and regrets of the chief, and to make a peaceful reconciliation. He exchanged presents with Lukongeh, and a covenant by blood was arranged, a goat being slain between them. For nine days he remained as the guest of the king, who treated him with marked hospitality.

Great was the delight among the Kagei people when Mackay returned safely to the mainland. The landing was amidst tumultuous joy; the women dancing on the beach, while the chiefs made the occasion an excuse for a drinking carousal.

This leads Mackay in his journal to make an entry as to "Drink" being the curse of Africa. Everywhere the people, of all ranks and ages, men, women, and children, are prone to alcoholic intoxication. They are clever in making

drink from all available native products, fruits as well as grain; and traders bring their vile stuff from the coast to increase the demoralisation. Mackay resolved to become an abstainer, and he gives as the result of his observation that little will be effected for the civilisation of Africa till this curse is subdued. In some parts of Africa the chiefs and rulers have done all in their power to hinder the importation of liquor, and in this they have shown more humanity and right feeling than European traders and Governments have often done.

As soon as possible, the little vessel, the *Daisy*, was patched up and repaired; but it was too frail to be a safe craft on the lake, which was often tossed with tempests. The help of Lieutenant Smith in navigating was now sorely missed, for Mackay had no experience in handling sails, and none of the natives had any knowledge of sailing. Canoes, usually hewn out of solid trunks of trees, and propelled by paddles, were the only means of transit. Mackay waited and longed for the arrival of the other workmen, by whose labour a stronger boat could be built, and fitted with the boiler and engine. To Uganda the only access was by water—the access on either side of the lake being blocked by hostile tribes. The kingdom of Mtesa was therefore far from accessible, the route from the Nile being also tedious and dangerous. The only hope was to have a good steamer, both for Uganda itself, and for the stations on the lake which might hereafter be occupied.

## VI.

### ARRIVAL AT UGANDA. KING MTESA.

It was not till November, 1878, that Mackay arrived at his desired destination—Mtesa's capital in Uganda. In August he had a narrow escape from being drowned, the *Daisy* being wrecked near a place on the west shore of the lake, the very spot where Stanley had one of his hair-breadth escapes from

massacre by unfriendly savages. It was well that Stanley at that time refrained from firing on the assailants, for in that case they would probably have taken terrible vengeance on those who were now wrecked at the place, and wholly at their mercy. Mackay bears his testimony that wherever he came on the tracks of Stanley, he found that his treatment of the natives had been such as to win from them goodwill and respect for the face of a white man.

By much labour and ingenious contrivance the wreck was repaired, "much as one would make a pair of shoes out of a pair of boots. Cutting eight feet out of the middle of her, we brought stem and stern together, patching up all broken parts with the wood from the middle portion." After eight weeks' hard work she was launched once more on the Victoria Nyanza, and in due time reached Uganda.

The king had for some time been expecting the Christian teachers. He received Mackay with apparent satisfaction, and seemed to give him every encouragement to commence his work. Soon after arriving, Mackay was laid aside by a short but dangerous illness. On recovering, and again being able to go to the king's presence, much sympathy was manifested, and from this time the entries in Mackay's Diary are cheerful and hopeful. Here is one which shows well the feeling of the writer in those early days at Uganda:—"God has blessed, and is still blessing our work here, for He has made the king and people willing at least to be taught. Fortunately Suahili is widely understood, and I am pretty much at home in that tongue, and I have many portions of the Old and New Testament in Suahili. I am thus able to read frequently to the king and whole court the Word of God. Sundays I hold regularly Divine service in court, and all join as far as they understand. I hope to be able to guide them in the way of a more humane policy than has existed hitherto. Cruelty,

slavery, polygamy, witchcraft, are only some of the terrible evils to be combated, and I have not been slack in my testimony regarding them. Only the grace of God can undo all that the devil has been doing here since the world began. But that grace is sufficiently powerful to do so, and more."

Such was the hopeful and even sanguine spirit in which Mackay laboured in the early period of his residence in Uganda. During many months the same routine of teaching and reading and conducting Divine service at the court on Sundays, continued. For instance, on Sunday, January 26, 1879, we read in the Diary, "Held service in court. The Psalm I selected, 51st, struck with force, and the king gave the meaning of it in Luganda. Read St. Matthew x. 32, xi. 30. The Spirit of God seemed to be working, for I never found so deep an interest before, nor so intelligent an understanding. Explained carefully the failing of men to keep the commandments of God, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Oh may the mighty Spirit of God work deeply in their hearts by His grace! He alone can do it."

In regard to willingness to listen to the Word of God and to be taught, and also in regard to the observance of Sunday, the king certainly continued for a time firm and exemplary. But on other points the progress was far from satisfactory. Mackay made many an earnest remonstrance, and maintained many a tedious argument on cruelty, or slavery, or polygamy, or witchcraft and belief in charms and divinations, on all which the king's opinions and practice appeared to be little affected. The sorcerers and medicine-men, and other impostors and deluders, held their sway with little restraint, the king himself affirming that it was reasonable to retain the old religion while partly accepting the new religion of the white men.

There appeared also more formidable hindrances and more powerful enemies to the truth. The Mohammedans in the

place were constantly striving to undermine the influence of the Christian teaching. A more vexatious and mischievous opposition arose from the arrival of Romish priests on the scene. It has become the policy of the Church of Rome to send emissaries to every station where Christian missions have been commenced. How they have done this in Tahiti and other islands of the Pacific, in Madagascar, and other parts of the mission-field, carrying tares to sow wherever the good seed has been sown, is well known. In Uganda the same anti-Christian system was adopted. They brought presents, admirably selected to please those who received them—rifles, ammunition, gay uniforms, helmets, swords, cuirasses, mirrors, and plate. Towards the Protestants they conducted themselves from the first in the most insulting manner, refusing to kneel when the missionaries were holding service at the court, sneering at their teaching, and soon openly declaring that they had come to oppose “men who taught lies and not truth.” The king at last appointed a day for discussion. It was a bewildering scene for the chiefs and others who formed the audience. With a heavy heart, Mackay left the place, thinking of the trouble thus begun, but assured that in the end the victory must be with the truth. He felt renewed determination to give the people of Uganda the Scriptures in their own tongue, and teach them to read and understand them.

From this time we find Mackay more busy than ever, carving wooden types for making reading-sheets, and giving lessons to all whom he could reach. Such entries as these appear—“All day occupied with readers at various stages. Some I hear in the house, while others I take into the workshop and teach them while I am busy at the vice.” Another day he takes to court a dozen sheets of large alphabets, with which Mtesa was delighted, and distributed at once to his chiefs. The king said that all must learn to read, and he would promote those who got on best.

## VII.

### HOPES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Occasionally Mackay had hopes of the king being touched by the grace of God, but more usually he had doubts and misgivings as to the sincerity and depth of his professed convictions. Slowly and with sadness the good missionary had to give up these hopes when he found that any impressions were only transient, and in heart and life the king remained unchanged. Then Mackay strongly, though reluctantly, recorded his conviction that his case seemed hopeless, for he was “guilty of every form of crime and vice, uncleanness, robbery, and murder.” Feeling this, he wrote—“Mtesa is a pagan—a heathen—out-and-out! All the faculties of lying, low cunning, hatred, pride, jealousy, cruelty, and complete ignorance of the value of human life, combined with extreme vanity, a desire for notoriety, greed, and absolute want of control of animal propensities,—all these seem to be not only combined, but even concentrated, in him.

“Every act of seeming generosity, or of any other redeeming nature, we cannot but now conclude, from several years’ examination of his character, to have been done either for the glorification of himself in the eyes of foreigners, or merely as a bait to gather more into his net.”

It was during General Gordon’s splendid government of the Soudan that the events happened which led to the mission being undertaken at Uganda. His opinion was asked, and he frankly said that the report of Mr. Stanley about Mtesa had raised higher expectations than he thought justifiable from what he knew of the man and of the country.

For Gordon, Mackay had the utmost admiration, and when Gordon heard what his countryman was like, and what he was doing in Uganda, he longed to secure him as one of his lieutenants

in the Soudan. It was otherwise ordained, and all was done for the best. And Mackay preferred to remain a humble labourer at a mission station to the dignity and power of an Egyptian Pasha. It was a sad disillusion as regards the king, but it was what Gordon anticipated, who had from the first formed a poor opinion of him. He thought him "very acute for a native, but crafty, and without any truth or principle." Mackay told the king plainly that he was "merely playing with religion, professing himself one day a Christian, another day a Mussulman, and a third a follower of his old superstition." Sometimes the king retorted rudely with charges of insincerity against the missionaries. He asked one day what they came for, and Mackay replied that "they came in response to his own request to Stanley to come and stop with him, and teach his people the knowledge of God. Mtesa said he understood they came to teach how to make powder, and shot, and guns, and that he wanted men who would do this. He wanted men to work for him, and that we must no more teach. He said he could not ask the people to follow our religion till we had shown our skill in arts and taught them to work."

So things went on year after year, the king dishonest and crafty, and the missionaries often sorely discouraged, and sometimes even in straits from want of the necessities of life. This was a state of affairs of which also Gordon had given warning, for he had said, "Mtesa, on principle, keeps his visitors on short commons, expressly to make them humble themselves before him; and that, I expect, the mission will find irksome."

It was irksome, and sorely tried their faith and patience. In an interview with the venerable Moffat before leaving England, Mackay asked what he advised him to take with him, and the answer expressed strongly what was now needed—"Patience, patience, patience!" If any one desires to have a striking illus-

tration of the Divine words, "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints,"<sup>1</sup> let him follow the record of those years of labour, and trial, and vicissitude which passed over Mackay and his comrades who successively were sent to join him, from 1876 to 1883. It was a time of toil, sorrow, disappointment, yet always a "patient continuance in well-doing." And as time went on, there were fruits of Divine grace slowly but surely ripening. The missionaries were often gladdened by finding living proofs that their labour was not in vain in the Lord, and among chiefs as well as the people were not a few who were evidently "new creatures in Christ Jesus." One of the first and most interesting of the converts was only the slave of a chief, but a bright intelligent fellow, who was one of Mackay's earliest pupils, taught by him to read, and who had himself learned to write. He read with eagerness the Gospels and many Psalms, and his life was exemplary and in accord with his profession. In 1882 several of the converts, after careful instruction, were baptized by one of the missionaries, the Rev. P. O'Flaherty. Other cases there were, but it was impossible to tell how many, for they lived in fear of their lives being taken. Though Mtesa refrained from violence towards the white men, his cruelty towards his own people remained as horrible as before he ever heard of Christianity. Human sacrifices on a large scale were performed on every occasion sanctioned by ancient customs. Victims were taken not only from the palace and neighbourhood, but bands of executioners were sent out to capture unwary passengers coming to or going from the town. The accounts would be almost incredible, but that we know the same horrid cruelty exists in other dark places of Africa. Mackay assures us that on some occasions as many as two thousand innocent victims were butchered by the king's order on a single day!

<sup>1</sup> Revelation xiii 10

## VIII.

## A NEW KING IN UGANDA.

In October, 1884, Mtesa died, and one of his younger sons, Mwanga, succeeded him. He was a weak, vain, and vicious young man. The crafty Arab traders easily worked on his suspicions and fear. They confirmed his prejudices against white men by declaring that their presence in Uganda was with ulterior views of getting possession of the country. The true motive of the Arabs was to get rid of the missionaries, whose influence they dreaded as likely to check the nefarious trade for which they themselves haunted the Lake countries. It was not long before fierce persecution of the Christian converts, as friends and followers of the missionaries, began. On the 30th of January three youths were seized, snatched from the very presence of Mackay and his comrade, the Rev. R. P. Ashe, charged with no crime but that they were being taught to read. They were cruelly tortured and mutilated, and then burnt alive—the first martyrs of Uganda. Threats of a general massacre were heard.

The rumours of the arrival of German ships off the coast, and of the expected coming of Bishop Hannington, roused the king to renewed suspicions and active hostility. This was in the autumn of 1885. There was uncertainty as to the route which the bishop would take toward the Nyanza. It was soon known that he had come through Usoga, and got as far as the other side of Ripon Falls, when he was met by an army of Baganda, or people of the land of Uganda, out in that direction on a slave raid. He was made prisoner, and word sent to the capital. The king summoned his chief councillors, and a peremptory order was sent off, after a short conference, to kill the bishop and his whole party.

This dark deed seemed to have caused great agitation in the king's mind. He feared some disastrous consequences, yet

he assumed a defiant and insolent demeanour, saying that Lukongeh had killed white men, and Mirambo also, yet the Europeans at the coast, or the Queen of England herself, could never reach him to take vengeance. One day the king's favourite page, the head of his personal servants, ventured to say that it was wrong to kill the bishop, who was coming in a friendly spirit, as white men would be benefactors to the country. Instantly the lad was ordered off for execution, and was burnt alive that very day. Well might Mackay and his companions continue in a state of anxious suspense. They were confined to their own quarters, and every one forbidden to come near them, on pain of death. Mwanga, like another Pharaoh, would be glad to get rid of them, yet would not let them go. His design apparently was to keep them as hostages, dreading the arrival of avengers from the coast.

In the summer of 1886 the position was still one of anxiety. Writing on the 7th of April, Mackay says, "We are, thank God, here alive and fairly well, and in peace. But still we are far from at rest. The king continues to regard us as before, unfavourably, judging by his words and actions. Our work continues, but more clandestinely than otherwise. Still we are able to carry on printing, which distributes truth and knowledge, without the necessity of collecting numbers, and so raising suspicion. Thus the stone rolls noiselessly. A few weeks ago Mwanga's palace was burnt to the ground. Next day, lightning struck a house close by where he had put up. Poor wretch, he was terrified out of his wits, and made off to his new temporary capital, on the creek, some eight miles off. There he is now. Ashe and I have been there several times to see him. His own fire originated in his gunpowder store. One hundred kegs blew up, and played fearful havoc. Just before then, rumours had come of white men being in the north-east, come to look for the bishop

(Hannington). The king thought they had stormed his seat, and fled, with one or two lads, sword in hand!"

On the 28th of June Mackay wrote to his father the tidings of more sorrowful events. "Only a month ago, a violent persecution against the Christians broke out, and they have been murdered right and left. The king threatens to kill them all. We are in a position of the gravest danger. The tyrant is rash and vain, and fancies there is no power in the world that can call his vilest and most cruel acts in question. If this part of the world is longer neglected, and if effective means are not taken to bring this bloodshed to an end, the indelible disgrace of abandoning our fellow-Christians to torture and the stake will remain a blot on every land of freedom. We believe it to be necessary that we be enabled to leave this country—our withdrawal will only be temporary—until this eccentric potentate be brought to reason."

Mackay thought that if his own country, or any single power, could not interfere in order to secure freedom of faith in Uganda, there might well be a European conference to take up the subject, and proclaim an "East African Free State." If on the Congo, why not on the Nile?

In a later letter, July 11th, 1886, he writes in the same strain, and repeats his urgent plea for some force being brought to bear to check such cruel massacres. "Bulgarian atrocities," he says, "can rouse the indignation of Europe, but not so the massacre and torture of Christians in Madagascar or Uganda." It was a natural feeling for a man loving freedom and indignant at tyranny, but rulers and statesmen can with difficulty be brought to interfere in the affairs of remote lands, however urgent may be demands made for their pity or their protection. It was only after ages of cruelty and oppression that Christian nations combined to check the atrocities perpetrated by Algerine pirates and corsairs, and in like manner foreign

influence might be invoked in behalf of Christians in other lands, whether under Pagan or Popish tyranny. It is right merely to mention that Mackay thought such interference justifiable, and that, as Cromwell caused the massacres in Piedmont to be stopped, so might the Christian powers in our own day secure protection for the persecuted people in East Africa.

In the same letter the arrival, a few weeks previously, of Dr. Junker, the Russian explorer, is announced. He was not molested, having no concern with the troubles of the mission, but he was glad to get quickly away from so detestable a place, as he considered it. He said he would do all he could, if he got back to Europe, to enlighten people as to the true condition of the Lake country, and of the southern part of the Soudan. Under Dr. Junker's care Mackay sent away his journals, and meteorological observations taken during the previous eight years.

After a time one of the missionaries, Mr. O'Flaherty, was allowed to leave, and later on Mr. Ashe, so that Mackay was left absolutely alone, in the power of the tyrant, for eleven months. At length Mwanga gave permission for him to leave, on condition of another missionary, the Rev. E. C. Gordon, then at the south end of the lake, taking his place. A few months later, Gordon was joined by the Rev. R. H. Walker, to whom the king accorded a public reception. He always welcomed new comers, were it only for the gifts that it was the custom to present on getting an audience. By this time there was a lull in the storm of persecution. Mr. Walker was surprised at the amount of success that had followed the early labours of the mission. A large body of native Christians went out to meet him, and on the Sunday 150 to 200 were present both at the morning and afternoon service. It was a refreshing and cheering sight. Gordon was able to sell large numbers of the printed gospels and other books at a good price, and all

classes seemed eager to learn. The king continued for a time favourably disposed, and there was every prospect of carrying on vigorously the good work of which Mackay and Ashe had laid the foundation. The efforts of Mwanga to suppress the truth had failed. There were many fearless confessors of the Christian faith, some of them, such as the admiral of the king's canoe fleet, high in position, with hundreds of the people. There had been many who witnessed for Christ, and no case was known of any one denying the Lord, even with the prospect of cruel torture and death.

## IX.

### AT USAMBIRO.

After leaving the capital, Mackay settled himself for a time at Usambiro, on the south coast of the Nyanza, in the territory of a friendly chief. Soon afterwards he was joined here by Bishop Parker, who had come as the successor of Hannington. There were no fewer than six brethren at Usambiro at the beginning of 1888. But the number was soon reduced. Mr. Blackburn died early in the year from fever, and a fortnight later Bishop Parker also passed away after a very brief illness. The others dispersed to various stations except Ashe, who remained with Mackay, but he too had to return to England, and Mackay was again alone, till he was joined by Gordon and Walker, who were driven by fresh persecution from Uganda, along with many native refugees.

It was at Usambiro that Stanley first met Mackay. Of this meeting, with a description of the mission station, and the busy occupations there, a most graphic account is given in the second volume of *Darkest Africa*. The library, the school classes, the workshop, the forest clearing, boat-building, and the constant and varied occupation, astonished even the veteran traveller. "If any man," says Stanley, "had ever reason to be doleful, and lonely, and

sad, Mackay had, when Mwanga, after murdering his bishop, and burning his pupils, and slaying his converts, turned his eye of death on him. And yet the little man met it with calm blue eyes that never winked. To see one man of this kind, working day after day for so many years, bravely, and without a syllable of complaint, and to hear him lead his little flock to show forth God's lovingkindness in the morning, and His faithfulness every night, is worth going a long journey for the moral courage and contentment that one derives from it."

Stanley stayed at the Mission station from the 28th of August to the 17th of September, and was delighted with all that he saw, and truly grateful for the comfort and restfulness enjoyed in such society. He urged Mackay to accompany them to the coast, for much he must need rest and change, but like Livingstone he declined to return till his work was done. Well might Stanley say, when he heard with grief of Mackay's death, that we have lost "the best missionary since Livingstone." The satisfaction of the meeting with Stanley and Emin, and their officers, was mutual, Mackay, in his next letter home, warmly telling of the agreeable change of "seeing nearly a dozen white faces all at once, and to enjoy for twenty days the pleasant company of gentlemen, mostly English."

Amidst all the busy activity of Mackay in work and in teaching, he ever took the keenest interest in what was passing in Europe and outside the region where he was a voluntary exile. He contrived to keep up correspondence to and from England, and with the regions of East Africa. On the side of the west he was shut out from all information ever since the occupation of the Soudan by the followers of the Mahdi. Of the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon he knew nothing till long after these sad events. But in other directions he always found or made a way open. From him came

almost all the intelligence that reached England regarding Emin Pasha prior to Stanley's expedition. Emin's own acknowledgments of the good services of Mackay are warmly expressed, and they do him more credit than almost anything that has been heard about him. "Since the very first lines I wrote to Mr. Mackay have been in his possession, up to the present time, he has acted for us in the most generous and unselfish manner possible; indeed, we shall never be in a position to thank him sufficiently for all he has accomplished; he it is who has aided us, notwithstanding that he has had personally to suffer for it, and he has been both a true friend and adviser to me. When I have been extremely cast down his letters have aided and upheld me, and given me fresh courage to new work. He has divided what he had with me, and has robbed himself to overload me with presents. May God, who protects us all, richly reward him; it is perfectly out of my power to thank him sufficiently."

While Mackay was at Usambiro, strange events had taken place at Uganda. Mwanga, abandoned to evil thoughts and passions, was surely working his own ruin. Writing to his father on October 26, 1888, Mackay said, "Are you gifted with second sight? In your last letter, June 14th, you say of Mwanga that 'his day is coming pretty fast.' Mwanga's day has come; Uganda has rebelled, and the poor king had to flee, getting into his canoe with some boys and women, and paddling for dear life, till he reached Magu. I have already sent for him to come here (to Usambiro), that I may help him to escape to the coast if the Baganda come after him. I should willingly do my utmost to save the poor creature's life in spite of all his cruelties and murders. He implores me to fetch him myself and take him anywhere I please, or slay him if I like! Or he is ready to go with me to England, which he has heard is an asylum for deposed kings."

The truth was that Mwanga had

harassed and made himself so odious to his subjects that the Christian and Mohammedan soldiers combined to drive him away, for the protection of their own lives. A new king was elected, but this successor, Kivewa, proved little better, and Arab intriguers gained his ear, so that the Mohammedans were supported against the Christians. On the 12th of October the Arab party commenced a sudden attack, and the Christians had to fly, losing many of their number and all their property. The missionaries as well as their people were plundered and expelled. A year passed, and, again in October, in 1889, the very anniversary of the last year's rising, the Christian party got the supremacy and the Arabs had to flee for their lives. Mwanga was then brought back in triumph to his capital.

## X.

### LAST DAYS.

All this Mackay heard of, and described in the very last letter which he wrote from Usambiro. It was dated 22nd of January, 1890. In less than a fortnight after he was seized with a severe attack of fever, which carried him off on the 8th of February, aged little more than forty years. The sad news reached the Church Missionary Society on the 14th of April, forwarded by telegraph from Zanzibar. Not till ten days later did the letter arrive, the last message of Mackay.

One sentence in a letter to Mr. Eugene Stock gives proof of the indomitable spirit of the man and his devotedness to the cause of Christ. "What is this you write—'Come home'? Surely now, in our terrible dearth of workers, it is not the time for any one to desert his post. Send us only our *first* twenty men, and I may be tempted to come to *help* you to find the second twenty."

As it is of Mackay we are giving a brief memoir, and not a history of the mission, it is not necessary to say more of affairs at Uganda. Other mission-

aries have since gone there, and carried on the work of evangelisation and civilisation. This region has since come within the sphere of the British Protectorate

work for God and civilisation accomplished by Mackay, his brave comrades and successors. We may be certain that the influence of the British Protectorate,

and that of the Germans, whose territory adjoins that under the British flag, will be on the side of freedom and toleration in matters of religion. The safety of Christian mission work is now secured. The greatest danger lies in the intrigues of the Moham-medans, who watch for opportunities of regaining their baleful power.

Uganda is now one of the most fruitful and promising fields of missionary enterprise. There, as elsewhere, the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. A native Cathedral, a splendid structure from the local



of Uganda. It is worth noting that when some years ago there was a proposal that this country should withdraw from Uganda, one of the principal arguments used against the suggestion was the injury which would be done to the great

point of view, has been built in the capital, and there are many other cheering tokens of the depth and permanence of the work in that land which will ever be associated with the honoured name of Alexander Mackay.